

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY USSR (Far East)

SUBJECT North Korean Contract Fishermen on
Kamchatka Peninsula

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1. Once a year, in April or May, North Korean fishermen were hired by the Soviets and sent to work in Kamchatka. After applying for and receiving the job, one fisherman was sent to Hungnam by train. There he was kept for 20 days in a barbed wire enclosure and given a medical examination. He signed a contract, printed in Korean on one side and Russian on the other, which had the following provisions:
 - a. Korean laborers will work from eight to twelve hours a day.
 - b. The wage will be paid according to hours of work.
 - c. The duration of the contract is from _____ to _____. This contract may be extended.
 - d. If the laborer is injured on the job, sick or recuperating, his wage will continue to be paid.
 - e. Koreans will be treated equally with Soviets under Soviet law.
 - f. In addition, for a two-year contract, the laborer will be paid 2,700 North Korean won* and 50 kilograms of rice. Work shoes and clothes, which will be given ahead of time, will be deducted from this sum.
 - g. Baggage brought into the Soviet Union will not exceed 30 kilograms.
2. After having been given contracts, boat tickets, and baggage checks, about 400 fishermen were put aboard a Soviet ship. The trip to Kamchatka took 21 days with a five-hour stop at Vladivostok, during which the passengers remained on the ship. The ship arrived at Golbagoak, where a thorough baggage and body check was conducted by Soviet customs authorities. All papers were taken away from the fishermen, but the contracts were later returned.
3. Another fisherman landed at Petropavlovsk (158-39, 53-01) and was transferred to Golchu, a fishing village on the east coast of Kamchatka of 10,000 people, half of whom were Koreans. Many North Koreans applied for the job in Kamchatka because of the high cost of living and scarcity of essential commodities at

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home. Although the Koreans worked for Soviet companies, they were controlled by an interpreter, who was generally a Korean with Soviet citizenship.

4. The food supply was imported by the Soviets and sold in government stores. Most food was available, at high prices, except fruit, candy, vegetables, and potatoes. Although the peninsula is not adaptable to farming, natives did raise radishes and potatoes, which they sold to the Korean laborers. Before May 1948 there was rationing. Because the Soviets controlled not only the food but clothing and other products, there was no black market or private business in these fishing communities. The following are representative prices in government stores as of September 1949:

rice	1 kg	17 rubles	cotton cloth	1 yd	17.54 rubles
flour	1 kg	3 rubles	sugar	1 kg	15 rubles
bread	1 kg	6 rubles	butter	1 kg	70 rubles
black bread	1 kg	3.2 rubles	canned meat	800 gr	32.50 rubles
meat	1 kg	32 rubles	wine	100 gr	24 rubles
cotton work suit		277 rubles	vodka	1 bottle	52 rubles
leather shoes		277 rubles	overcoat		577 rubles

Purchases from the local inhabitants: potatoes 1 bucket 100 rubles
radishes 1 kg 5 rubles

5. In Golbagosk laborers were graded from 1 to 6. Grade six was the highest and paid 31.50 rubles per day, while grade 5 paid 24.50 rubles and grade 4 paid 17.54. Additional pay over the base rate was given so that in a good month a worker in grade 5 could earn 1,300 rubles and make a yearly income of 12,000. Since food and clothing averaged 700 rubles a month, some saving could be made.
6. In the Golbagosk area there were five fishing factories from two to eight kilometers (one to five miles) apart. About 40 security police lived in two of the factories and regularly inspected the others. The head of the third factory was Mikhail Petro (Petrov) [redacted] with a Korean named KANG (), [redacted] as assistant. Equipment at this factory included one ship with a 50-horsepower engine, one with a 25-horsepower engine, and six wooden boats manned by a crew of seven each. About 110 Koreans acted as box makers or salters. In 1947, the third factory produced 54,000 boxes of salted fish at 80 kilograms per box and 8,000 boxes of salted fish eggs at 150 kilograms per box.
7. There were only a few Soviet men in the area. There were a number of young girls who often had love affairs with the young Koreans. Mail was not allowed. There was one radio at the third factory, over which broadcasts were given by a loudspeaker to the workers.
8. Fishermen were generally returned to North Korea in September or October. One fisherman boarded a ship at Golbagosk on which there were a number of Japanese. There had been no Japanese at Golbagosk and only a few reported at Golchu. The ship stopped at Petropavlovsk, where the passengers were allowed to go ashore. There money was changed at the rate of four won to one ruble. It took the ship about 15 days to reach Chongjin, North Korea.

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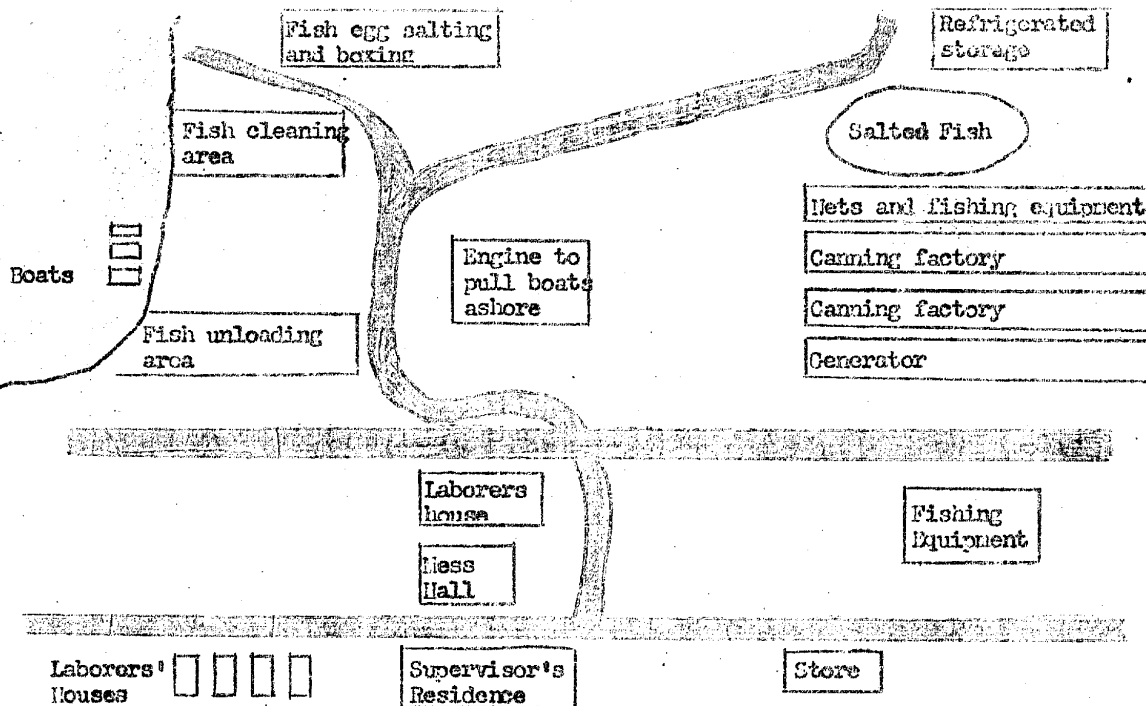
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-2-

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9. The following is a chart of the third factory at Golbagoak:



25X1 * Comment: In view of the indefinite date of this information, an exact value for the North Korean won cannot be given in hard currency. However, note that the exchange rate from rubles to won was one to four.

25X1 ** Comment: Although Golbagoak is not found in any of the gazetteers, source places it at approximately 161-00, 54-30.

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